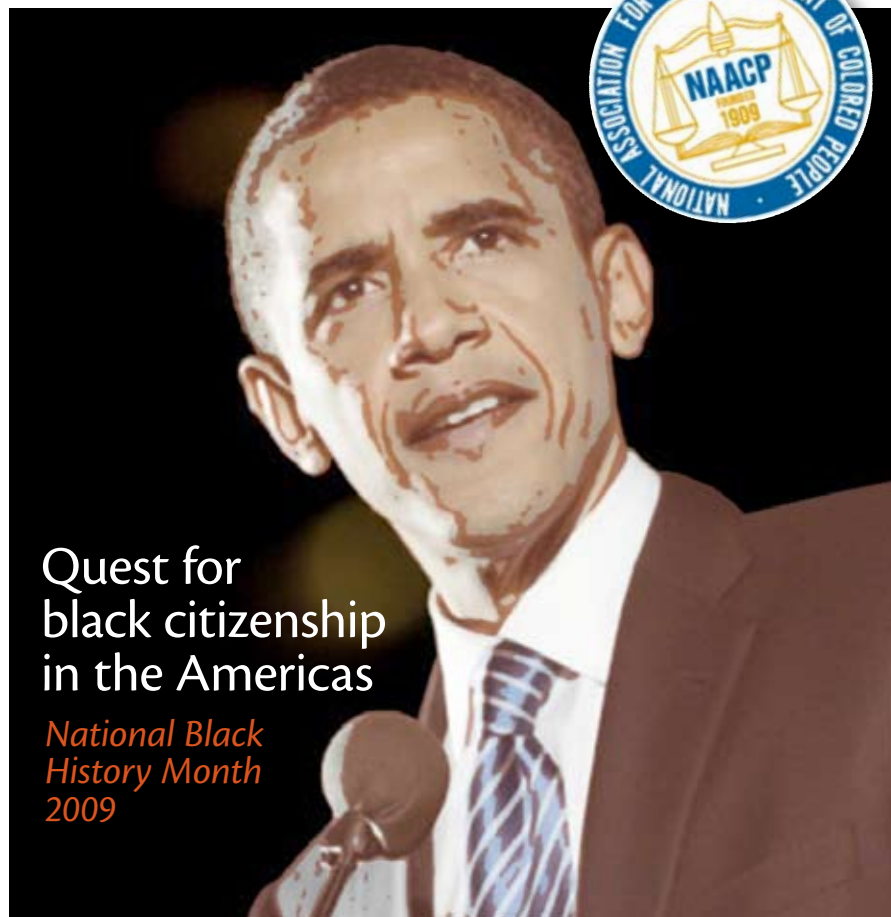


Caregiver Connection

February 2009

A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers



Quest for black citizenship in the Americas

*National Black
History Month
2009*

The election of Barack Obama as the first American president of African descent is forever marked in American history. Neither the founding fathers nor the African slaves could have ever imagined a day when a black man would hold the highest office in the nation.

A century ago, an interracial group of Americans joined together and formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The story of the NAACP is one of struggle to create and maintain equal citizenship for all Americans.

Through exposing the horrors of lynching, keeping the issue of equality before the courts, and organizing branches throughout the country, the NAACP drew a national following and inspired others to form organizations for racial change.

As the NAACP marks its centennial, the progress of black citizenship could not be more symbolized than by the election of Barack Obama for president.

Association of the Study of African American Life and History
<http://www.asalnh.org/2009NationalBlackHistoryTheme.html>

Regional Foster Parent Representatives

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Meet the Anne Travis-Barker family

Anne Travis-Barker has been fostering for over 24 years. She is a single, foster, adoptive, biological mother and Foster Parent Hub leader for King County South End. She has eight grown children of her own and currently is fostering four children: Eric, Douglas, Darjuan and Patrice ages 7 to 15.

Anne is very clear about why she keeps fostering after 24 years, "I have known since a child growing up in Mississippi that my calling was to help others, especially children. Growing up in Mississippi our family always had folks in our home—family, friends, extended family, neighbors".

Anne is very involved with her church and supporting an orphanage in Mexico. In July 2008 she received her Ph.D. in Theology. She is dedicated to her children and what keeps her fire burning after 24 years of fostering is "love for the children". Anne believes in "being positive" and that "building a network" of foster parents offers a great deal of support. Anne encourages other foster parents to "take a positive approach" with the children and the department and to build a network with other foster parents for support and education. She states that "children are better served" if foster parents and the department can take a "positive approach" in the child's case plan and to always remember to "never forget the children".

You can too.

Children of incarcerated parents

Are you a caregiver with a child whose parent(s) are incarcerated? Do you know how many incarcerated men and women have children? Do you know how many children in long-term foster care have incarcerated parents? What are the facts and myths about incarcerated parents?

Children of incarcerated parents are a reality in the foster care system. There are no easy answers for what may be in the best interest of each child, his or her parent(s) and other family members. A strong support system with relationships that can provide positive role models is an important resource for each mother and father in prison. If you are caring for a child whose parent(s) is incarcerated – could you be part of that support system?

How many incarcerated parents are there in the U.S.?

- One in every 31 individuals in the U.S. is under some type of correctional supervision (U.S. jails and prisons confine nearly 2.3 million individuals and more than 798,000 individuals are on parole) (PEW 2008).
- Federal estimates show nearly 7.5 million children have a parent in prison, jail or under correctional supervision (HHS 2008).

How many children in long-term foster care have incarcerated parents?

- Approximately 80% of these children had at least one parent who had been arrested or incarcerated.
- A child who has at least one parent who has been incarcerated in a Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) prison is between five and fifteen times more likely to be involved in a child protective services case than a child in the general population (DSHS Research and Data Analysis 2008).

What are the facts and myths about incarcerated parents?

- MYTH: Most incarcerated mothers were arrested for violent crimes.
- FACT: The majority of women are incarcerated for drug-related offenses; this number has doubled from 1990–1996.
- MYTH: Very few incarcerated parents have completed their education.
- FACT: Almost 40 percent of incarcerated parents have at least a high school education and 15 percent have graduated from college.

- MYTH: Incarcerated parents are unlikely to be employed at the time of their arrest.
- FACT: Most incarcerated parents were contributing to the family income prior to incarceration – 68 percent of men and 47 percent of women were employed prior to arrest.

What does this mean for me?

If you have a child(ren) placed in your home who has an incarcerated parent(s), you can support him or her by:

- Understanding that children may have a wide range of feelings when a parent is arrested and incarcerated such as anger, sadness, confusion, fear, anxiety, powerlessness, guilt and maybe even relief.
- Encouraging them to talk about their feelings. For children, incarcerated parents are not "out of sight, out of mind."
- Providing the child with a non-judgmental, relaxed and safe place to express their feelings, thoughts and beliefs. Helping children deal with these feelings is an important part of helping them cope with a parent's incarceration.
- Speaking with the social worker on your foster child's case about ways that you can partner with an incarcerated parent, including facilitating visitation, writing letters or sending photographs.

Research has shown that visitation and contact helps the child to reduce traumatic reactions to separation, helps them gain a more realistic perspective on what happened with their parent (Hairston, 2007; Snyder, Carlo and Mullins 2001), and it leads to more positive behavioral and development outcomes (Vigne 2008). Research has also shown that parents also benefit from contact with their children and family members; it reduces problematic behaviors and reduces the likelihood of becoming incarcerated again after their release (Vigne 2008).

There are resources from DSHS and other agencies to help children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. Please see the DSHS publication "Beyond the Walls," which can be downloaded for free from the DSHS publications website at www.dshs.wa.gov/genninfo/pubs3.html.

If you have any questions about children of incarcerated parents please contact: Miriam Bearse, Correctional Policy Analyst, DSHS (360) 902-8250 or bearsml@dshs.wa.gov

Happy Valentines Day!

Valentines Day family traditions

Often the fondest childhood memories stem from family traditions that were lovingly repeated throughout the years. Family traditions have family at the center of a celebration spending time together and creating lasting memories. If you don't already have a family Valentine's Day tradition, why not start one this year? It could be the beginning of many wonderful years of Valentine's Day memories with your family.

A Valentine family tradition doesn't have to be expensive. The main idea is to spend time with the family together. Here are some inexpensive ways you can start a Valentine's Day family tradition in your family. For example:

- Make a food treat together
- Play a family game
- Watch a favorite family movie
- Exchange homemade gifts

Holidays are very special to children and Valentine's Day can be even more memorable if you help the child(ren) in your family create positive memories. Have you thought of helping your foster child(ren) create a Valentine memory for their parent(s)? Photos of the child framed in a simple red heart, or a small photo album sharing pictures of their child's activities would be a special remembrance for a parent to receive. If your foster child is old enough, let them write their own message. For younger children you may need to help with a simple message. As children experience special memories on holidays, you may find them building the same traditions when they have their own family (Sheila Anderson <http://EzineArticles.com/>).

Upcoming events in 2009

The next three **Statewide Consultation meetings** held at the Tacoma DCFS office, 1949 South State Street, Tacoma, WA 98405 from 1:00 to 4:00, Room 195. The dates for the 2009 meetings are:

- April 8, 2009
- July 8, 2009
- October 7, 2009

Contact your foster parent regional representative for more information.

17th Annual Children's Justice Conference

April 6-7, 2009

Washington State Convention and Trade Center
Seattle, Washington



Post Adoption **Support**

Did You Know?

CHANGE – a word heard everywhere

The following changes in circumstance require immediate notice to your adoption support program consultant:

- The child is no longer living at home
- You are no longer legally responsible for your child
- Change in permanent address
- Your child will still be in school past his or her 18th birthday
- Death of child or parent
- Change in marital status
- Change in legal status or physical custody of the child

If you adopted a special needs child, you may be eligible for the adoption tax credit without having to document expenses. In year 2007 the tax credit was \$11,390. How much, if any of the credit you can use is based on:

- (1) your income (families with federal adjusted gross income above \$210,820 cannot claim the credit at all); and
- (2) your total federal tax liability. In one year, you can use as much of the credit as the full amount of your federal income tax liability. The amount of your tax liability (line 46 of Form 1040) is based on your taxable income (excerpt from NACAC fact sheet)

Book Nook

BOOK TITLE

Journeys After Adoption
Understanding Lifelong Issues

AUTHOR

Schooler, Jayne E.

PUBLICATION YEAR

2008

ABSTRACT

This book presents a historical look at the past practices of adoption as it has touched adoptees, birthparents, adoptive parents, and siblings; the long-term impact of these past practice; and, how each member of the adoption triad has coped (from Child Welfare Information Gateway).

If you have any books you would recommend for adoptive parents, please contact Lonnie Locke by e-mail at lolo300@dshs.wa.gov or 1-800-562-5682. The name of the book, content summary, and author would be helpful

Regional Contacts

Region 1 – Spokane

Jan Lammers* 509-363-3383
Pam Copeland* 509-363-3379

Region 2 – Yakima

Steve Bergland* 509-225-6500
Carol Cyr 509-225-6531
(Financial Specialist)

Region 3 – Monroe

Steve Foster* 360-805-3032
Linda Richardson* 360-805-3030

Region 4 – Bellevue

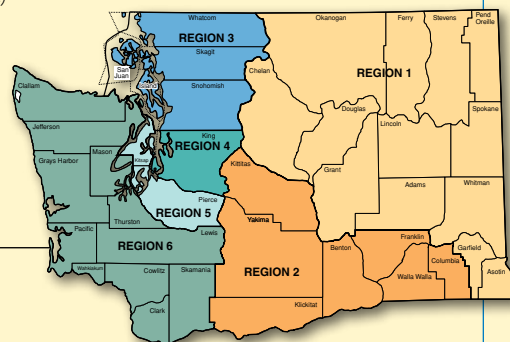
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Jenne Norris 425-590-3069
(Social Worker)

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Laura Davis* 253-983-6281

Region 6 – Tumwater

Cheryl Barrett* 360-725-6758
Kim Mower* 360-725-6778



Toll free number: 1-800-562-5682
(listen carefully to the recorded message)

* Adoption Support Consultants

Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call 206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website:
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve
<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.

Why foster parents should attend the quarterly regional and statewide foster parent consultation meetings

It's an opportunity for foster parents to be supported and heard!

Regional Foster Parent Representatives invite and encourage all foster parents and relative caregivers to attend the regional and statewide meetings.

The purpose of the consultation meetings is to improve communication between foster parents and Children's Administration centered on recruitment and retention of foster homes, effective foster parent training and other related issues.

Please take advantage of this opportunity – your input is important! You may contact your regional representatives for more information or **Michael Luque, MSW, Foster Care and Kinship Care Program Manager**, Children's Administration, 360-902-7986, or email lumi300@dshs.wa.gov or,

Foster Parent's Association of Washington State (FPAWS), Beth and Mike Canfield, Presidents, at 800-391-CARE or 360-377-1011.

Core In-Service Training for licensed foster parents and unlicensed relatives

The following are just a few of the on-line Core training classes for foster parents and unlicensed relatives.

On-Line training through Pierce College at <http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/distance/ofpe/>

Core In-Service classes are the next logical step in your education as a caregiver. These classes are designed to take your skills to the next level as part of the child welfare team!

- Behavior Management
- Care-Giving for Children with ADHD/ADD and Organically Related Mental Health Issues
- Care-Giving for Children with Extreme Behavioral and Other Functional Mental Health Issues
- Maintaining a Connection: Understanding the importance of birth families

Remember, each online workshop provides six training hours towards fulfilling state licensing requirements and can be completed for free in the comfort of your own home!